



2011 Vidya Gaem Awards
Award Speeches

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Hyperbole Award - WINNER: Dead Island

The Dead Island trailer invokes powerful emotions of desperation and hopelessness: a perfect match for the feeling we expect from a survival horror game. Viewed by tens of millions, this trailer created an immense amount of hype and also a debate between casuals about child violence in video games. In the end the game failed to live up to expectations, and ultimately serves as another warning to be cynical about game trailers. However, on its own merits, this trailer made the greatest impression in 2011.

Sort of OK Dev Award - WINNER: Valve Corporation

For Valve, Portal 2 was their flagship this year. Expanding on the original with new characters, incorporating new gameplay elements, as well as achieving cross-platform cooperative multiplayer. Valve is known for interacting with its player base and actively encourages features that should be standard with today's technology, such as free DLC, developing map editing tools, and informative developer commentary. Valve still has their fair share of critics, but in 2011 they provided a polished AAA title, continued to foster their fan bases in TF2 and Left 4 Dead, and because of all this they deserve the high ranking title of being Sort of OK.

Karl Marx Award - WINNER: Activision

Long gone are the days of Activision publishing quality titles for the Atari 2600, with Bobby Kotick now at the helm. Modern Activision is the ruthless ruler of corporate gaming, driving headlines series like Guitar Hero and Tony Hawk into the ground with over saturation and lack of innovation. Kotick and Company ravenously bleed every cent from their games and destroy every chance of a healthy fanbase. Not satisfied with already owning the most profitable IP in video games, Activision is now showing their ruthless greed by blatantly moving towards subscription-based services on Call of Duty, on top of annual costs and expensive DLC. Most worrying is their likelihood to succeed and lead other gaming publishers to view this approach as industry standard.

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Alright Publisher Award - WINNER: Valve Corporation

As a publisher and digital distributor, Valve has continued their strong history in 2011, if you happen to own Portal 2 on PS3 you were given free access to a PC copy. It was actually pretty encouraging to see a publisher promoting the game itself, rather than just the platform it was on. Through Steam sales they created a meta-game, with coal, coupons, and game trading, as well as encouraging players to play a variety of different games for additional bonuses. The main quality that sets Valve apart from other publishers is how they provide standard features for free, and any extra stuff is optional and can usually be earned for free, which is of course contrary to the trend of free-to-play cash shops and all that other stupid bullshit. Basically, Valve wins the Alright Publisher Award of 2011 because they're not total scamming douchebags.

Hamburger Helper Award - WINNER: Dragon Age 2

Well, this does not surprise me at all. With the biggest winning margin of the Awards, Dragon Age 2 convincingly took out terrible writing for 2011. Signaled by Bioware's switch to console as a lead platform, as well as featuring retardedly simple conversation wheels, Dragon Age 2 confirmed the downfall of their epic D&D storytelling. What we got to experience was Relationship Manager 2011!

"Oh! That sounds fun doesn't it!" Wait, no it doesn't. I don't want to play this video game. I never want to play this video game. Basically at pigeonholed your character into entertaining a variety of low-quality fanfiction romances, ranging from moody and boring to edgy and boring, as well as stupid and boring. It also featured a variety of stereotypical and cliché personalities, which of course meant BioDrones could accuse critics of bigotry and intolerance if they dared called out the terrible writing of Dragon Age 2. Since Hamburger Helper herself is currently on maternity leave, we can expect future stories and cutscenes to entertain bizarre birthing fantasies!

Planescape Award - WINNER: Portal 2

Every entry in this category received quite a bit of strong support, but Valve managed to impress us the most with clever and interesting writing in Portal 2. The game explores the overall story of Aperture Science further than the first game, while still leaving us wanting to know more about if and how it fits into the Half-Life universe. An excellent balance is achieved between history and character revelation, comedy, and drama. Showing Valve's mastery of using a silent player character. Oh, and one more thing. A big thanks to Valve for not including another cake joke. Seriously, I didn't want to have to go through that again. All those goddamn 13 year olds thinking that shit was totally hilarious, it wasn't. It was overplayed!

Blunder of the Year - WINNER: Duke Nukem Forever

As a fun alternative to the dark and gritty id Software titles in the mid-90s, Duke Nukem 3D quickly became a cult classic and demanded a sequel. Duke Nukem Forever was anticipated for a few years, but it became a laughingstock due to constant engine revamps which were always behind the current tech anyway. The graphical advancement of this generation of consoles essentially ceased. At this point, 3D Realms really didn't have an excuse to keep delaying production. The publisher, 2K Games, dumped 3D Realms and gave the project to Gearbox to complete. Nobody actually expected or wanted this game to be released, and featuring completely mediocre everything, it was by far the Blunder of 2011.

Press X To Win The Award - WINNER: Dragon Age 2

This is what happens when the developer of a story-based RPG franchise openly tries to attract the Call of Duty market. Combat in Dragon Age 2 feels like playing a mindless horde mode in babbys first Flash game. Anything that looks even mildly interesting has zero player interaction, and it doesn't take long before it's back to pointless dialogue choices and button-mashing. Shallow questing and repetitive objectives results in gameplay that falls flat on its face at every turn. You know one time I met a homeless man and he said he was very hungry and, well, being the upstanding gentleman I am I gave him a copy of Dragon Age 2. He proceeded to consume it. He ate the whole thing. Then he had horrible life-threatening diarrhea. Unfortunately, he died later that night. The moral of this story is Dragon Age 2 causes homeless men to have diarrhea and then die. The end.

"Actually Kind of Fun" Award - WINNER: Dark Souls

Dark Souls has a complex system which explains very little and forces players to die, adapt, and die again. It features a wide variety of weapons and upgrade paths, all with distinct advantages, disadvantages, and counters. Single-player, co-op, and PvP are seamlessly combined into a singular experience. It achieves a perfect blend of heartache challenge and f... f... f... fun. Everyone but the PC master-race and the weak willed should know by now why Dark Souls receives our acknowledgement.

Rehash Award - WINNER: Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3

If this right here is evidence that bro gamers really are willing to order up the same shitty meal every year. Modern Warfare 3 completely crushed the competition for Rehash of The Year. The only thing added in this iteration of the Call of Duty franchise was the ability to give Activision even more of your money for no reason, by paying a subscription fee that allowed you to experience features previously considered standard in FPS games. Despite all of this the game broke a bunch of sales records and there are no signs of this trend stopping.

Reddit Award - WINNER: BioDrones

BioDrones are defined by their inability to acknowledge clear criticism about the numerous faults in BioWare games and will constantly make absurd statements to justify their fandom. Think a game is too expensive? "Bioware should be charging double! They're actually being generous." Just want to play a video game without a bunch of romantic bullshit? "What are you, some sort of homophobe?" BioWare themselves have become entwined in a downward spiral, due to the isolation with their own fans on their forums. They may never return from their fall from grace unless all the BioDrones snap out of their fanatical post-purchase rationalization complex.

Audiophile Award - WINNER: Battlefield 3

The sound team on DICE have done a great job of recreating realistic and immersive soundscapes in Battlefield 3. Freshly recorded at a military facility, the game features crisp, bright samples brought together by a technically brilliant sound engine. Ambient noises are layered beneath active vehicle and weapon sounds, and it all comes together to provide a hyper-realistic sensation of wartime audio.

Eargasm Award - WINNER: Bastion

Complementing the compelling story of Bastion, the soundtrack has a unique flavor, fusing downtempo electronic with bluegrass and Hindustani classical, among others. It was a risky choice for Darrin Korb, departing from traditional RPG soundtrack styles, but he and the development team committed to it completely. Hitting the right emotional chords during gameplay, players are kept in tune with frantic battle sections and touching storyline moments. Listenable on its own merits the bastion soundtrack gives us the greatest Eargasm of 2011.

"My Eyes Are Bleeding" Award - WINNER: Minecraft

Two years ago, we maybe could have forgiven Notch for his shitty programmer graphics in the low-budget Minecraft Alpha, but given the community investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in the concept, we cannot forgive Mojang for the retail release that updated absolutely nothing on this front. Looking worse than any game it could ever claim inspiration from, the visual style of Minecraft is bland, unappealing, and well, just plain lazy. The best visual moment is when you're deep inside a cave with no light source and you can't see a goddamn thing.

Stylish Aesthetics Award - WINNER: Bastion

Bastion provided us with a rare treat in 2011, by introducing a palette of more than just three colors. Not only this, it painted a range of moods resisting the trend to identify with established styles of grimdark brown and blue or pure rainbow. Building on interesting and original characters, monsters, and landscapes, we're shown a rich, engaging world that sometimes surreal, and sometimes gritty. It's very clear that painstaking effort was put into these visuals, and because of that, Bastion earns the honor of Stylish Aesthetics.

Grafics Cat Award - WINNER: Battlefield 3

Battlefield 3 narrowly came out on top over strong competition from The Witcher 2. A combination of the impressive Frostbite 2.0 graphics engine and a commendable amount of effort from the artists results in insanely detailed visuals. DICE has proved that development for PC as a lead platform can produce outstanding results. Meanwhile, scaling down for consoles can produce somewhat successful results. Regardless of those retarded ragdoll glitches, the sheer quality and definition of the assets and animation set Battlefield is our winner for best technical graphics.

Activision Award - WINNER: EA's Origin

Using Battlefield 3 as a shoehorn to force Origin onto the gaming community, EA has truly created a monster. Essentially, a hideous version of the generally well-liked Steam. Many horror stories of abysmal customer support exist, where the customer support are either too ignorant, unwilling, unauthorized, or just too stupid to fix the problem. The software launched with the ability to scan computers, and forced users to allow this if they wanted to play the games they had paid for. EA is really trying hard to dethrone Activision as the company saying "fuck you" to gamers the loudest, and with Origin they're one step closer to being the biggest douches in the universe.

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Award - WINNER: Star Wars: The Old Republic

The primary innovation BioWare touted about Star Wars: The Old Republic was the comprehensive voice acting for every line in the game. Now admittedly, the performances of the individual actors may not be as terrible as in some other games, but several factors cause shit to seriously hit the fan. The focus of much of the pre-release development commentary, and the purported millions spent achieving it, set too high an expectation for a nice-to-have feature that nobody really cared about. I mean seriously, nobody cared. Other aspects hindered the impact of the costly voice work. Conversation wheels cause cutscenes to feel disjointed and jarring, script writers naturally turned Star Wars into another BioWare romance simulator. And, of course, switching voice actors for the same character in the middle of a goddamn cutscene. What really set the voice acting in the Old Republic below the rest is the overcompensation of resources toward an ultimately disappointing gimmick which resulted in a gross neglect of the rest of the game.

Golden Voice Award - WINNER: Stephan Merchant (Wheatley in Portal 2)

A newcomer to video game voice acting, Stephen Merchant beat Mark Hamill just enough to take out Golden Voice of 2011. A very engaging and funny performance as the Wheatley Personality Core in Portal 2, we're treated to proper character development, well-timed wit, and a wide variety of expression. Merchant completely nailed his performance and is awarded with a well-deserved win in this category.

Best Voice Acting Award - WINNER: Portal 2

By an overwhelming margin, Valve's voice team for Portal 2 was our best of the year. The game features the voice talents of Ellen McLain as GLaDOS and the Sentry Turrets, J. K. Simmons as Cave Johnson, and newcomer Stephen Merchant as Wheatley. Each actor presents a superb performance of the well written dialogue, and the casting and voice direction is pretty goddamn excellent. Each character portrays a range and development of convincing emotions throughout the game, which is pretty impressive and challenging considering the majority of characters are non-human. With Portal 2, Valve proves that quality voice acting is achievable, and we hope other studios take their lead and weave it in as a subtle but powerful enhancement to their games.

Most Interesting New IP - WINNER: Bastion

Not just a new IP, but the debut game from Supergiant Games, Bastion is a fresh new title which defies a lot of industry standards. Made by a team of just seven people, it's obvious there was a huge amount of effort and passion that was put into each area of development. The cohesion and quality in these elements allowed Bastion to come out ahead in a category with a lot of strong competitors. In some cases, video games can be considered art, and according to a lot of people, this is one of those cases. We're interested and hopeful to see if Supergiant follows this masterpiece up with a sequel of some kind.

Most Hated Game Of The Year - WINNER: Dragon Age 2

Dragon Age 2 managed to be awarded with "Most Awful Gameplay", "Terrible Writing", as well as being runner-up for "Worst Graphics" and "Least Improved Sequel", all of which will be aggressively defended by our "Most Hated Fanbase"! What made Dragon Age 2 especially susceptible to our intense criticism was that it was an overwhelmingly disappointing change in direction to its prequel, which had given us hope for the future of Western RPGs. It also marked the corruption of another developer with a well liked history, adding to the growing feeling of dread about the future of video games. Seriously, what a piece of shit.

Least Hated Game Of The Year - WINNER: Deus Ex: Human Revolution

Deus Ex Human Revolution was hated a lot before release, with many aspects of the previews complained about. However, upon release it received a very positive reception, with almost everyone changing their opinion and renewing their faith that AAA titles can still be good. This was shown by overwhelming support for a nomination, and a landslide in the votes. A lot of people expected Monster Girl Quest to take this out.... Anyway, Deus Ex Human Revolution is the clear winner here and deserves appreciation for giving us the least to hate about it.

Teabagging Award - WINNER: Spike Video Game Awards

THEPUPPETPLAYER: The Spike Video Game Awards are terrible, and everything connected with it should burn in a giant fire consisting out of all Spike hosts ever. But, I somehow feel that I should defend them. Don't get me wrong, as a gamer, I don't feel my taste in gaming being represented properly by the VGA, but I realized something... I realized what the VGA really are. And now I'm not angry anymore!

The VGA are a giant advertising campaign and nothing more. I don't think that anyone who would call himself an experienced gamer can take the show seriously in any way. It's like the Academy Awards, just worse. It tries to represent the taste of the mainstream customers, and that's, ladies and gentlemen, where the money is! And everything is about money. The Spike Video Game Awards are showing us "Hey, look at us! Video games are cool! We are cool! And you are cool cause you like video games." And the brainless masses are happy.

There are few people who criticize the VGA for being not representative of gamers, but here are the shocking news: they are. At least for many. Not for me, perhaps not for (You), but for many people. Please, don't throw your PS3 out of the window, because there's no hope for true gamers. We need the VGAs as much as we hate them.

Without mainstream, video games would be doomed. I predict... two, three, perhaps even four years of mainstream domination. Then, even the seemingly brainless masses will look in another way. Look at more interesting games, more interesting concepts, and the market will do what the market has to do. It will adapt. And great games will be produced.

Of course, the VGA will still show the most mainstream games there are, divided in stupid categories presented by douchebags or people that know nothing about video games. But who cares? As long as I still see interesting games out there I'm able to ignore the VGA completely. And you should do this, too. Have a wonderful day.

VY Canis Majoris Award - WINNER: Gabe Newell 3 (his eyes)

Last year was a big year for our Gaben. Turning 50 in 2012, we hope Gaben is taking steps to reduce his risk of heart disease, so he can live to see the release of HL3, and we can bask in his giant luminosity for years to come.

Seen as the incarnation of Valve, in 2011, Gaben broadcast a tongue-in-cheek "Fuck You" to Ubisoft and their claim that PC piracy hurts their bottom line; scared us with his knife collection; and managed to get people in a frenzy over digital coal.

Oh, and his eyes won.